

Minutes of Human Services Advisory Committee, August 17, 2011. 2 p.m.

Present: Kevin Grunwald, Human Services Director; Barbara Lavoie, Senior Social Worker; Ethel Manzaris, (chair Youth Services advisory committee) chairperson; Sara Anderson (Mansfield Advocates for Children); Jane Blanshard (Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities); Beverly Korba (Senior Center Association); Joan Terry (Commission on Aging). Absent: Frank Perotti, vice-chairperson.

Ethel called the meeting to order at 2:05. Following the resignation of Joan Quarto, Jane accepted the position of secretary.

Barbara gave a presentation outlining her job and her many responsibilities, which focus on the rapidly growing senior population in Mansfield. She does many referrals, seeking doctors who will accept Medicaid and explaining benefits to those who are eligible to receive them. She runs a low-vision group and a caregivers' support group, and serves on the board of the Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. Her hours have been extended from three days a week to four, because of the expanding needs of the senior community. When asked about her efforts to attain a license for counseling, she replied that she has been so busy with so many varied tasks that her supervision time has been reduced to one hour a month when her supervisor goes over cases with her. Ethel pointed out that this would mean years before she receives the license, and Kevin explained that after she was hired the requirements were modified so that this is no longer necessary. She does counseling, but does not do therapy. For that she makes referrals to qualified counselors.

Barbara has supervised two senior UConn social services students, one of whom updated the refrigerator packets, which provide medical information in case of emergency. Both helped in such projects as the pamphlet, which will be published this fall, *At Your Fingertips*, to provide information on all kinds of available senior services.

Ethel asks how she keeps track of weekly contacts as listed in a handout from Kevin. Barbara replied that while the referrals might not all be listed in her computer, they would be listed in the records of the people she referred to.

Bev said there is a big concern about local doctors not accepting Medicare patients, a scary rumor. Kevin said that he is not aware of any doctors locally who do not accept them, but thinks there was a recent political rumor about a reduction of Medicare payments to doctors, which may have given rise to the fear that some of the doctors would not be able to afford to accept such patients.

Kevin reported that the department has received a grant to educate off-campus UConn students about local laws and regulations regarding rental housing, and their landlords as well.

The town helped a number of local children to go to camp this summer, and is advertising slots in its school readiness program.

The Senior Center, which is now open till 7:30 on Thursday evenings, is hoping to have one night a month of programming, such as a speaker or a movie.

Kevin reported that a committee is interviewing people to replace Sandy Baxter, Early Childhood Services. The committee consists of Sandy, Pat Michalak, and a person from Colchester. The question was raised as to why Sandy is on the committee to replace

herself, but the response was that since she is retiring she could be helpful to a new person. For the second interview the committee will consist of Kevin and Maria Capriola, as well as a child advocate. Jane asked why they haven't asked Louise Bailey to interview people who might replace her as librarian.

Kevin explained the statistics he had handed out. Ethel asked if we should improve our tracking of referrals and he agreed that we should.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Blanshard, Committee Secretary